

What is claimed is:

1. A method for facilitating a transaction between a buyer and one seller, the method comprising the steps of:
 - receiving an offer which specifies
 - a type of product,
 - at least one condition, and
 - an offer price specified by a buyer;
 - receiving a payment identifier specifying a financial account, the payment identifier being associated with the offer;
 - making the offer available to one seller after receiving the payment identifier;
 - receiving an acceptance from the one seller, the acceptance being responsive to the offer; and
 - providing a payment to the one seller by using the payment identifier upon receiving the acceptance.
2. The method of claim 1, in which the step of providing a payment to the one seller comprises:
 - providing a payment that is based on the offer price.
3. The method of claim 1, in which the step of providing a payment to the one seller comprises:
 - providing a payment that is based a penalty payment amount if the buyer indicates withdrawal of the offer after the step of receiving an acceptance.

1 4. The method of claim 1, in which the offer price defines at least two forms of currency.

1 5. The method of claim 4, in which the offer price defines:

2 a first amount of first form of currency, and

3 a second amount of second form of currency.

1 6. The method of claim 4, in which at least one form of currency is frequent flyer miles.

1 7. The method of claim 4, in which the payment identifier specifies:

2 a first financial account for paying a first form of currency, and

3 a second financial account for paying a second form of currency.

1 8. The method of claim 7, in which the first financial account is the second financial
2 account.

1 9. The method of claim 7, in which the step of providing payment comprises:
2 debiting the first financial account and debiting the second financial account.

1 10. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
2 selecting the one seller from a plurality of sellers based on the type of product.

1 11. The method of claim 1, in which the financial account is a credit card account.

1 12. A method for facilitating a transaction between a buyer and one seller, the method
2 comprising the steps of:

3 receiving an offer which specifies
4 a type of product,
5 at least one condition, and
6 an offer price specified by a buyer;
7 receiving a payment identifier specifying a financial account, the payment identifier
8 being associated with the offer;
9 determining whether to accept the offer; and
10 receiving payment by using the payment identifier upon determining to accept the
11 offer.

1 13. The method of claim 12, in which the step of determining whether to accept the offer
2 comprises:

3 randomly determining whether to accept the offer without considering the offer price.

1 14. The method of claim 13, further comprising:
2 determining whether to accept the offer based on product availability after the step of
3 randomly determining to accept the offer without considering the offer price.

1 15. The method of claim 13, further comprising:
2 generating a random number; and
3 determining, if the random number is within a predetermined range, whether to accept
4 the offer based on product availability without considering the offer price.

1 16. The method of claim 12, further comprising:

2 creating a counter offer upon determining to reject the offer, the counter offer
3 specifying
4 the type of product, and
5 a counter offer price; and
6 transmitting the counter offer to the buyer.

1 17. The method of claim 16, in which the counter offer price is based on the offer price.

1 18. The method of claim 17, in which the counter offer price is less than the offer price.

1 19. The method of claim 12, further comprising:
2 determining a plurality of products that satisfy the at least one condition.

1 20. The method of claim 19, further comprising:
2 transmitting an indication of the plurality of products to the buyer.

1 21. The method of claim 20, further comprising:
2 receiving from the buyer a selection of one of the plurality of products.

1 22. The method of claim 19, further comprising:
2 selecting a product from the plurality of products to fulfill the offer.

1 23. The method of claim 22, in which the step of selecting comprises:
2 selecting a product based on expected profit from the product.

1 24. The method of claim 22, in which the step of selecting comprises:

2 selecting a product based on availability of the product.

1 25. The method of claim 22, in which the step of selecting comprises:

2 selecting a product based on a comparison of predicted sales of the product and actual
3 sales of the product.

1 26. The method of claim 22, in which the step of selecting comprises:

2 selecting a product based on whether actual sales of the product are less than
3 predicted sales of the product.

1 27. The method of claim 22, in which the step of selecting comprises:

2 determining, for each product, an amount by which actual sales of the product are less
3 than predicted sales of the product; and

4 selecting a product that has a maximal amount by which actual sales of the product
5 are less than predicted sales of the product.

1 28. The method of claim 22, in which the step of determining whether to accept the offer
2 comprises:

3 determining whether sales of a first set of products are less than sales of a second set
4 of products; and

5 selecting a product from the first set of products if sales of the first set are less than
6 sales of the second set.

1 29. The method of claim 28, in which each product of the plurality of products is
2 allocated for fulfilling offers.

1 30. The method of claim 12, in which the step of determining whether to accept the offer
2 comprises:
3 determining whether to accept the offer based on an availability of a product.

1 31. The method of claim 12, in which the step of determining whether to accept the offer
2 comprises:
3 determining whether to accept the offer based on a comparison of predicted sales of a
4 product and actual sales of the product.

1 32. The method of claim 31, in which the step of determining whether to accept the offer
2 comprises:
3 determining whether to accept the offer based on whether actual sales of the product
4 are less than predicted sales of the product.

1 33. The method of claim 12, in which the step of determining whether to accept the offer
2 comprises:
3 determining a minimum price for a product; and
4 accepting the offer if the offer price is greater than the minimum price.

1 34. The method of claim 33, in which the step of determining a minimum price
2 comprises:
3 determining a minimum price for the product based on an availability of the product.

1 35. The method of claim 33, in which the step of determining a minimum price
2 comprises:
3 determining a minimum price for the product based on a comparison of predicted
4 sales of the product and actual sales of the product.

1 36. The method of claim 33, in which the step of determining a minimum price
2 comprises:
3 determining a minimum price for the product based on whether actual sales of the
4 product are less than predicted sales of the product.

1 37. The method of claim 12, in which the financial account is a credit card account.

1 38. The method of claim 12, in which the step of determining whether to accept the offer
2 comprises:
3 delaying acceptance until a predetermined time.

1 39. A method for facilitating a transaction between a buyer and one seller of airline
2 carriage, the method comprising the steps of:
3 receiving an offer which specifies
4 an origination,
5 a destination, and
6 an offer price specified by a buyer;
7 receiving a payment identifier specifying a financial account, the payment identifier
8 being associated with the offer;
9 determining whether to accept the offer; and

10 receiving payment by using the payment identifier upon determining to accept the
11 offer.

1 40. The method of claim 39, further comprising:
2 determining a plurality of flights that specify both the origination and the destination.

1 41. The method of claim 40, further comprising:
2 transmitting an indication of the plurality of flights to the buyer.

1 42. The method of claim 41, further comprising:
2 receiving from the buyer a selection of one of the plurality of flights.

1 43. The method of claim 40, further comprising:
2 selecting a flight from the plurality of flights to fulfill the offer.

1 44. The method of claim 43, in which the step of selecting comprises:
2 selecting a flight based on expected profit from the product.

1 45. The method of claim 43, in which the step of selecting comprises:
2 selecting a flight based on availability of the seats on the flight.

1 46. The method of claim 43, in which the step of selecting comprises:
2 selecting a flight based on a comparison of predicted sales of seats on the flight and
3 actual sales of the seats on the flight.

1 47. The method of claim 43, in which the step of selecting comprises:
2 selecting a flight based on whether actual sales of seats on the flight are less than
3 predicted sales of seats on the flight.

1 48. The method of claim 43, in which the step of selecting comprises:
2 determining, for each flight, an amount by which actual sales of seats on the flight are
3 less than predicted sales of seats on the flight; and
4 selecting a flight that has a maximal amount by which actual sales of seats on the
5 flight are less than predicted sales of seats on the flight.

1 49. The method of claim 43, in which the step of determining whether to accept the offer
2 comprises:
3 determining whether sales of seats on a first flight are less than sales of seats on a
4 second flight; and
5 selecting a seat from the first flight if sales of seats on the first flight are less than
6 sales of seats on the second flight.

1 50. The method of claim 49, in which each seat of a plurality of seats is allocated for
2 fulfilling offers.

1 51. The method of claim 39, in which the step of determining whether to accept the offer
2 comprises:
3 determining whether to accept the offer based on an availability of seats on a flight.

1 52. The method of claim 39, in which the step of determining whether to accept the offer
2 comprises:

3 determining whether to accept the offer based on a comparison of predicted sales of
4 seats on a flight and actual sales of seats on the flight.

1 53. The method of claim 52, in which the step of determining whether to accept the offer
2 comprises:

3 determining whether to accept the offer based on whether actual sales of seats on the
4 flight are less than predicted sales of seats on the flight.

1 54. The method of claim 39, in which the step of determining whether to accept the offer
2 comprises:

3 determining a minimum price for a seat on a flight; and

4 accepting the offer if the offer price is greater than the minimum price.

1 55. The method of claim 54, in which the step of determining a minimum price
2 comprises:

3 determining a minimum price for the seat based on an availability of seats on the
4 flight.

1 56. The method of claim 54, in which the step of determining a minimum price
2 comprises:

3 determining a minimum price for the seat based on a comparison of predicted sales of
4 seats on the flight and actual sales of seats on the flight.

1 57. The method of claim 54, in which the step of determining a minimum price
2 comprises:
3 determining a minimum price for the seat based on whether actual sales of seats on
4 the flight are less than predicted sales of seats on the flight.

1 58. A method for assessing demand for a product, comprising:
2 receiving a plurality of offers, each offer specifying
3 a type of product,
4 at least one condition, and
5 an offer price specified by a buyer;
6 each offer further being associated with a payment identifier that specifies a financial
7 account for rendering payment upon acceptance of the offer; and
8 storing data from the plurality of offers.

1 59. The method of claim 58, further comprising:
2 adjusting a price of a product based on the offer price of at least one offer.

1 60. The method of claim 59, in which the step of adjusting comprises:
2 selecting a subset of offers, the product satisfying each condition of each offer of the
3 subset of offers; and
4 adjusting a price of the product based on the offer price of each offer of the subset of
5 offers.

1 61. The method of claim 60, in which the step of selecting a subset of offers further
2 comprises:

3 selecting a subset of offers that were accepted.

1 62. The method of claim 59, in which the price is a retail price of the product.

1 63. The method of claim 58, further comprising:

2 adjusting a future supply of a product based on the offer price of at least one offer.

1 64. The method of claim 63, in which the step of adjusting comprises:

2 selecting a subset of offers, the product satisfying each condition of each offer of the

3 subset of offers; and

4 adjusting a future supply of the product based on the offer price of each offer of the

5 subset of offers.

1 65. The method of claim 64, in which the step of selecting a subset of offers further
2 comprises:

3 selecting a subset of offers that were accepted.

1 66. A computer-readable storage medium storing a database of offers created in

2 accordance with the method of claim 12.

1 67. A computer data signal embodied in a carrier wave comprising:

2 an offer which specifies

3 a type of product,

4 at least one condition, and

5 an offer price specified by a buyer; and

- 6 a payment identifier specifying a financial account, the payment identifier being
- 7 associated with the offer.

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